

T W O
E X T R A C T S
FROM THE
S I X T H B O O K
OF THE
GENERAL HISTORY
OF
P O L Y B I U S.

- I. The origin, and natural revolutions, of civil government.
An analysis of the government of Rome.
- II. Some peculiar excellencies in the Roman government and
manners, illustrated by a comparison of them with those
of other states.

TRANSLATED from the GREEK.

To which are prefixed some reflections tending to illustrate the doctrine of
the AUTHOR concerning the natural destruction of mixed governments,
with an application of it to the state of Britain.

By Mr. HAMPTON.

L O N D O N:

Printed by J. HUGHS,

For R. and J. DODSLEY in PALL-MALL.

M DCC LXIV.



THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D. C.
JAN 10 1917

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE following Extracts, translated long ago, and afterwards revised for a private purpose, are now offered to the publick, because it appears to me that many things are contained in them, which may be applied to a more general, as well as present, use. The subjects indeed, that are here considered, are such as might at all times furnish very ample matter of instruction to the members of a free, but fluctuating, state. For what can more effectually tend to establish order and submission, and to promote all the just and reasonable ends of government, than to look upwards to the natural rise of civil policy, and to trace the progress of it through all it's various forms, and alternate changes; to observe the excellencies, and the defects, that belong to each several form; to mark the causes of decay and ruin, that lie concealed even in the most perfect systems; and to examine into the constituent parts, the manners, and the customs of those ancient states, which have been judged to bear a near resemblance to our own? Even in seasons of quiet and tranquillity, speculations of this kind would well deserve the attention both of those who are governed, and of those who govern. But when disorders are either felt or dreaded, such a view of things, not drawn by an obscure and contemplative philosopher, but by one who was versed in great affairs, can scarcely fail to afford many means of improvement and advantage, to all those at least, who are willing to employ their reason in the discovery of their duty: by enabling them to discern the true source, as well as tendency, of the evils that are present, and of those that are seen in their approach; to distinguish

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between vain clamours and real danger; and, in a word, to form to themselves some certain rule of judgement, sufficient to determine the pursuits, and direct the conduct, of every disinterested and prudent citizen, who is neither swayed by personal motives, nor blinded by the prejudice of party.

When I speak of ancient states as bearing a resemblance to our own, it is not my intention to insinuate, that this resemblance is so great or so intire, as some writers, from a slight and partial view of history, have been ready to imagine. Even those constitutions, which seem to approach the nearest in their form to that of Britain, while they agree with it in some general principles, are very unlike with respect to other points, not less essential and important. Thus, for example, the Roman government was neither a royalty, an aristocracy, nor a democracy; but a mixed form of government, compounded of those three simple forms. Such also is the government of Britain. But the proportion, in which these forms are combined together in each general frame, the temperament, with which the various parts are united in one body, and the nature, strength, and efficacy of the several powers, that are annexed to each separate part, must appear to an attentive eye, to be extremely different in the British constitution and the Roman. In both however, the first and fundamental principles are the same. And even with regard to those that are unlike, a comparison that shews a difference may be found to be, in some respects, not less instructive, than one that points out a resemblance. At least, the errors and defects, that are discoverable in one system, may serve to display in a fuller light the excellencies of the other. For beauty never shines with greater lustre, than when it is contrasted with deformity.

But in all the various matter of reflection, which these discourses will suggest, there is nothing perhaps that more particularly deserves attention at this time, than the conjecture,

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jecture, which the foresight and sagacity of this great statesman enabled him to form, concerning the destined ruin of the Roman government, and which afterwards was fully verified by the event. For mixed systems have also their natural and certain bane, as well as the simple forms: and as the latter carry in themselves the seeds of some congenial evil, which causes their destruction; so the former are brought to dissolution, by the change that is produced insensibly in the parts of which they are composed. It is well known indeed, that the strongest works of human wisdom are too weak to stand against the force of time, and the necessary progression of events. The course however of events may be impeded, though not diverted, by a foresight of the causes from whence they spring; and the destruction, which nature has assigned even to these most perfect forms of government, be retarded at least, though not prevented. But I shall here descend into some detail: not only because the truth of things is contrary, in this instance, to the common prejudices of mankind; but because the grounds also of the opinion, which I shall endeavour to illustrate and explain, are rather slightly shewn, than sufficiently developed, in the following work.

The general object of all mixed governments is the same: to avoid, on the one hand, tyranny; and, on the other, anarchy. The danger of the former is to be feared from different sides, according to the different distribution and allotment of the sovereign power, and the comparative strength and weakness of the several parts, of which the system is composed. In Rome, for example, if the patricians and the senate had retained that share in the supreme authority, which they originally possessed, the constitution might, in the course of time, have become an oligarchy. In Britain, if the princes had not yielded to the people some of their ancient rights, the state must long ago have rested in a simple monarchy. In the former of these states, the orders opposing and opposed,
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controuling and controuled, were the senate and the people. In the latter, they are the prince and people. In the one, the government could never have been converted, by any extension of the consular authority, into royalty : nor can it, in the other, whatever incroachments may be attempted by the nobles, ever slide into aristocracy.

The dread however of an oligarchical tyranny was but of short continuance in Rome. For, even from the time of the establishment of the Tribunitian magistracy, the senate and the nobles were so far from being able to invade the privileges of the people, that they were forced to employ continual efforts, to defend and preserve their own. The dread of an extension of the regal powers subsisted indeed for a much longer time in Britain ; the state of which, from it's earliest origin, had inclined to monarchy. But no sooner were the people become fully sensible of the increasing weight, which the abolition of the ancient tenures, the change of property, and the advantages of extended commerce, had thrown into their scale, than the phantom of arbitrary rule, which seemed to be advancing with hasty strides, was gradually diminished to the sight, and at length totally disappeared. At least, every man of candour must acknowledge, that, from the Revolution to the present time, the government has been strongly drawn towards democracy.

The opposite evil, anarchy, springs always from the same single source : from an excess of power allotted to the people, or extorted by them. By the usurpations of the people on the senate, the frame of the Roman constitution was weakened, disordered, and at last dissolved. The incroachments of the people upon the prince will most probably produce hereafter the same effects in Britain : and the ruin of the constitution will ensue ; not caused, as it has commonly been expected and foretold, by the corruption of the legislative body, but by the general corruption of the people.

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For anarchy, the offspring of popular power, and parent of despotick rule, is indeed the natural bane of governments, that are composed, like those of Rome and Britain, of the three simple forms. Such governments, according to Polybius, terminate in despotism: not from the abuse of royalty or aristocracy, but from the licence of democracy. It seems, that the people can no longer be intrusted safely with the exercise of power, than while simplicity and moderation, a love of order, and an attention to the publick good, direct their desires to proper objects, and contain their passions within reasonable bounds. The change of manners, that is introduced by time and prosperous events, the presumption that arises from success, and the vices that are spread among them by an overflow of wealth, soon render them alike incapable, of submitting to the authority which they have delegated to others, and of applying to the true ends of government that which they have retained. Obedience then becomes an intolerable constraint; the magistracies are suspected and opposed; and even the subordination, that was at first established by themselves, is judged to be injurious to the rights of liberty. But liberty is lost, as soon as it is emancipated from subjection to the laws. Upon these principles it was, that this great historian ventured to foretell, that Rome must at last return back again to monarchy, and be governed by arbitrary sway. Yet at that time, the republick flourished in full strength and dignity. The harmony between the several orders was preserved intire; and the authority of the senate moderated and directed the deliberations of the people. But he foresaw, that arrogance would spring from conquest; and that, as the riches of the state increased, the ancient habits of frugality and temperance, and the sufficiency that was derived from parsimonious industry, would give place to avarice and prodigality, to want and luxury. He foresaw, that turbulent and ambitious leaders would arise;

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who, by feeding the corruption, and flattering the greatness of the people, would strive to obtain from them in return the means of gratifying their own lust of wealth and power. In this state of things, the progress would be short and certain: from dissolute manners, to a rejection of all controul; from power usurped or misapplied, to tumult, violence, and intestine wars; from the tyranny of the contending heads of many factions, to the despotism of a single master.

Such was in fact the course, that determined the fate of Rome. And if reason, supported by the experience of this great example, may presume to judge, it seems, as I have said, most probable, that, by the same course likewise, the same fate will sooner or later be renewed in Britain. For as surely as power unrestrained degenerates into tyranny, so surely liberty in excess becomes at last the cause of it's own destruction. At what precise time the change will happen, it may be neither easy, nor prudent, to determine. Those who have remarked, not only that a great increase of power has been thrown into the popular scale, but that a contempt also of the laws, and an impatience of discipline, the effects of opulence and luxury, have already begun to shew themselves among us, may think perhaps, that the æra of this ruin lies at no great distance: unless publick virtue should rise superior to the efforts of aspiring faction, and the zeal of party be extinguished in a regard for the general good: unless those should interpose, whose proper duty it is, as well as peculiar interest, to resist alike the usurpations both of the prince and people; to stop all deviations from the line of safety, from what side soever they proceed; and to bring back the constitution to that middle point, in which alone the true poise of all mixed government is to be found; the point between the two extremes, of popular licence and arbitrary will.

T H E

The General History of
GENERAL HISTORY
OF
POLYBIUS.

BOOK the SIXTH.

EXTRACT the FIRST.

*The origin, and natural revolutions, of civil government. An
analysis of the government of Rome.*

CHAP. I.

*** **W**ITH regard indeed to those states of Greece, which have been often raised to a high degree of strength and power, and again as frequently have suffered an intire reverse of fortune, it would be no hard task, either to treat of the events that have happened among them in past times, or to speak with some assurance concerning those that must hereafter happen. For it is easy to recount transactions that are known; and obvious likewise, from an attentive view of former accidents, to derive a foresight of the future. But with regard to the republick of the Romans, as the present condition

of the government, on account of that variety of parts of which it is composed, cannot be explained without great labour; so, on the other hand, the want of being sufficiently acquainted, both with the general institutions, and particular conduct, that have prevailed among this people in former times, renders it not less difficult to pronounce concerning their future fortune. It will be necessary therefore to employ the closest pains, in order to obtain a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the advantages that are peculiar to the constitution of this state.

Among those then, who have treated of these matters in the way of science, the greatest part have distinguished civil government into three several kinds; Royalty, Aristocracy, and Democracy. But it may very reasonably be demanded of these writers, whether they speak of these as the only kinds, or simply as the best. In either case indeed they must be charged with error. For first, that kind of government is undoubtedly to be esteemed the best, which is composed of all the three now mentioned. The proof of this is evident, from experience and from fact, as well as reason. Such, for example, was the system, first invented by Lycurgus, and established by him in Sparta. Nor is it true, on the other hand, that these are the only kinds. For many are the examples of monarchical and tyrannical governments, which are greatly different from royalty; though they appear indeed to bear some kind of resemblance to it: which gives occasion to all monarchs, to cover themselves, as well as they are able, under this disguise, and falsely to assume the regal name. There are likewise many oligarchical states, which seem to approach nearly in their form to aristocracies; though these are in truth very widely distant from them. The same observation may be made, with respect also to democracies. The following illustration will serve more clearly to explain my meaning.

It:

It is not every government, which is conducted by a single sovereign, that is immediately to be termed a royalty: but that alone, which was at first bestowed by the consent of those who are governed; and which is administered according to right reason, rather than by force and terror. In the same manner, neither is every state to be called an aristocracy, which places the supreme direction of affairs in the hands of a few: but that only, in which those who are most distinguished by their prudence and integrity are appointed by free choice to govern. Nor lastly is that to be esteemed a democracy, in which the whole multitude usurp the liberty of pursuing their own counsels and designs without controul. But when we see a people, who, from the ancient manners of their country, are accustomed to pay due worship to the gods, to revere their parents, to shew respect to the aged, and to obey the laws; when, in the assemblies of citizens like these, the resolutions of the greater part are made the rule of government; then we behold the form of a just democracy.

There are therefore six different kinds of government: three, which are in the mouths of all men, and which have now been mentioned; and three more, that are allied to these by nature; Monarchy, Oligarchy, and the Government of the multitude. Of all these, the first in order is monarchy; which is established by the bare work of nature, without any preparation or design. From monarchy arises royalty; when art has been applied, to correct the vices of the former. And when royalty has degenerated into it's congenial evil, which is tyranny; the destruction of the latter gives birth to aristocracy. This again being changed, according to the natural order of things, into oligarchy; the subjects, roused to vengeance by oppression, resist the injustice of their governours, and establish a democracy. And in the last place, when the people themselves become haughty and untractable, and reject all law; to de-

mocracy succeeds, in the course of time, the government of the multitude.

That this deduction is agreeable to truth, will be clear to every one, who considers with attention the commencement and first rise, as well as the changes, which nature has appropriated to each particular kind of government. And indeed there is no other way, but by observing what was the natural birth of every state, to judge with certainty concerning the progress of it towards perfection, and from thence to decline and ruin; and to discern, at what time, in what manner, and into what different form it will at last be changed. Above all others, the Roman government may best be illustrated by such a method of inquiry: because this state, both in it's first establishment, and subsequent increase, displays a close conformity with the settled laws, and regular course of nature.

I am not ignorant indeed, that Plato, and some other philosophers, have already treated with the greatest accuracy of the several forms of government, and their alternate revolutions. But as there are but few, that are able to comprehend the length of their discourses, and the variety of matter which they contain; I shall endeavour rather to give a summary account of those more obvious principles, which are adapted both to common apprehension, and to the purposes of civil history. And in case that any obscurity or defect should be found in the general view, the particular detail, which I shall afterwards subjoin, will afford ample compensation, by removing every difficulty.

What then are the commencements, and what the original rise, of political societies? When a deluge, a pestilential disease, a famine, or any other similar cause, has brought destruction upon the human race; as tradition assures us it has happened in former times, and as it is probable it will again hereafter happen; and when all arts and institutions are extin-

guished

guished also in the same calamity; from the few, that are left alive, another progeny of men springs up: who, being conscious of their natural weakness, and attracted, like all other animals, to an union with their own kind, associate themselves together in a body. At this time therefore, it is manifest, that he who is superior both in strength and courage must govern and conduct the rest. For that this is indeed the genuine work of nature, is most clearly seen in the examples of the several kinds of animals, which are led by natural instinct only, unimproved by reason. Such are cocks, bulls, and boars, as well as other kinds: among all which, those that are confessedly the first in strength are placed at the head of all the herd. Such therefore is the original state of men: when they assemble together in a manner not unlike to that of other animals; and are led by those, that are the bravest and most powerful. And this state may properly be called a monarchy: in which the authority of those that govern is measured by their strength. But afterwards, when in these societies a common education and mutual intercourse have produced new sentiments and habits, then first commences royalty; then first arise in the human mind the notions of honourable and base, of just and unjust. These sentiments, and this change of government, are formed in the following manner.

From the union of the two sexes, to which all are naturally inclined, children are born. When any of these therefore, being arrived at perfect age, instead of yielding suitable returns, of gratitude and of assistance, to those by whom they have been bred, on the contrary attempt to injure them, either by words or actions; it is manifest, that those who behold the wrong, after having also seen the sufferings and the anxious care, that were sustained by the parents in the nourishment and education of these children, must be greatly offended and displeased at such proceeding. For man, who
among

among all the various kinds of animals is alone endowed with the faculty of reason, cannot, like the rest, pass over such actions with indifference: but will make reflection on what he sees; and, comparing likewise the future with the present, will not fail to express his indignation at this injurious treatment; to which, as he foresees, he also may at some time be exposed. Thus again, when any one, who has been succoured by another in the time of danger, instead of shewing the like kindness to his benefactor, endeavours at any time to destroy or hurt him; it is certain, that all men must be shocked by such ingratitude; through sympathy with the resentment of their neighbour; and from an apprehension also, that the case may be their own. And from hence arises, in the mind of every man, a certain sense of the nature and force of duty, in which consists both the beginning and the end of justice. In the same manner likewise, the man, who in the defence of others is seen to throw himself the foremost into every danger, and even to sustain the fury of the fiercest animals, never fails to obtain the loudest acclamations of applause and veneration from all the multitude; while he, who shews a different conduct, is pursued with censure and reproach. And thus it is, that the people begin to discern the nature of things honourable or base, and in what consists the difference between them; and to perceive, that the former, on account of the advantage that attends them, are fit to be admired and imitated, and the latter to be detested and avoided. When he therefore, who possesses the greatest power, and is placed at the head of all the rest, is found always to comply with the general sentiments, in supporting fortitude and merit, and in distributing to every one impartial justice; the people, no longer dreading his superior force, but paying a willing obedience to his wisdom, submit themselves to his authority, and with one consent maintain him in his government against all invaders, even to extreme old age.

And

And thus the monarch by insensible degrees becomes a king; when reason takes the rule, in the place of strength and violence. Such are the first perceptions among mankind of justice and injustice, of base and honourable; and such the origin and rise of genuine royalty. For the people not only confirm these leaders in the possession of the power to which they have been raised, but preserve it to their children likewise: being persuaded, that those, who have received their birth and education from virtuous parents, cannot but resemble them in manners. And if at any time they are displeased at the conduct of these descendants, they then choose other magistrates and kings. But having been taught to discern by past experience the difference between external faculties and the endowments of the mind, they now appoint to the supreme command, not those that excell in bodily strength and vigour, but those who are distinguished by their wisdom and superior reason.

In ancient times then, those, who had been once judged worthy to be invested with the regal dignity, continued, during the remainder of their lives, in the undisturbed possession and exercise of government: fortifying all the advantageous posts; inclosing their towns with walls; and obtaining such an increase of territory, as was necessary for the security, or the plentiful subsistence, of their subjects. And as they assumed no great distinction either in their dress or table, but lived a life that was conformable in every point to that of the other citizens, they raised against themselves no envy, nor afforded any matter of offence. But their descendants, having received the sovereignty in the course of hereditary succession, and finding, that all things already were obtained that were convenient for defence, and that the abundance of all necessities exceeded the demands of nature, were soon hurried, by the wantonness of ease and plenty, into an open gratification of every passion. They then began to be persuaded, that it was

was necessary that kings should be distinguished from their subjects by more splendid habits, and be served with more costly and luxurious tables; and pursued also with full career the indulgence of their amours, however lawless, without admitting any contradiction or controul. The first of these disorders soon excited envy and offence; and the latter, wrath and unrelenting hatred. And from hence, the royalty being now converted into tyranny, the dissolution of it was begun, by machinations formed against the persons of the sovereigns. These conspiracies were at first contrived, not by men of obscure or low condition, but by those of noblest birth, and who were the most distinguished by their courage and exalted spirit: for such are at all times most impatient of the insolence of princes. But the people, being not less offended also and enraged, having once obtained such leaders, readily joined their forces in the same attempt. And thus, the form of royalty and monarchy being utterly destroyed, an aristocracy grew up, and was established in its place.

For the people, moved with present gratitude towards those who had delivered them from tyranny, resolved to invest them with the government, and submitted themselves to their guidance and dominion. And these, being on their part also not less satisfied with the honour that was bestowed upon them, regarded the good of the community as the only rule of their administration; and employed their whole care and pains, to promote the happiness of individuals, as well as to advance the common interests of all. But when again the children of these governours were raised, in the course of succession likewise, to the same authority; unpractised, as they had always been in hardship or misfortune; and unexperienced also in that equality and liberty, upon which the government was founded; having been nurtured from their birth in the pre-eminence and honours of their parents; they began, some of them

them to accumulate inordinate wealth by fraud and violence; while others, allowing a full indulgence to their passions, abandoned themselves without restraint to riot and intemperance, adulteries and rapes. And thus, the aristocracy being now changed into an oligarchy, the passions of the multitude were once more inflamed; and the same destruction followed, that had before fallen upon the kings, when they had degenerated into tyrants. For no sooner was there found a single citizen, who, being encouraged by the general discontent and hatred that such a conduct had occasioned, was bold enough, either by words or actions, to attempt any thing against the governors, than the people with one consent were ready to concur in the design. And when they had killed or driven into banishment their oppressors, not daring to establish royalty, on account of the misconduct of the former kings, and being deterred also, by the mischiefs which they still more lately had experienced, from yielding the sovereignty to any certain number, they were then forced to have recourse to the single expedient that was left untried, and to place in themselves alone their confidence of safety. And having assumed into their own hands the conduct and the trust of government, they thus framed a democracy upon the ruins of the oligarchy.

During some time afterwards, and while any of those remained alive, who had beheld the miseries that flowed from the former unequal government, the people were all well pleased to maintain this popular state; and thought that nothing was more valuable than equality and liberty. But after the course of one or two successions, as new men sprang up, even these enjoyments, being now become familiar to them, began, through long use and habit, to be lessened in their esteem, and to give place to the desire of preeminence and power. Above all the rest, those who had acquired the greatest wealth, being eager likewise to possess the sovereign rule, and not able to obtain it by their own strength and virtue,

tue, endeavoured to draw the people to their side; scattering among them with profusion all their riches, and employing every method of corruption; till by degrees they had taught them to fix their whole attention upon the gifts by which they were sustained, and rendered their avidity subservient to the views of their own wild ambition. And thus the frame of the democracy was dissolved; and gave place to the rule of violence and force. For when once the people are accustomed to be fed without any cost or labour, and to derive all the means of their subsistence from the wealth of other citizens; if at this time some bold and enterprising leader should arise, whose poverty has shut him out from all the honours of the state, then commences the Government of the multitude: who run together in tumultuous assemblies, and are hurried into every kind of violence; assassinations, banishments, and divisions of lands: till, being reduced at last to a state of savage anarchy, they once more find a master and a monarch, and submit themselves to arbitrary sway.

Such is the circle, in which political societies are revolved; and such the natural order, in which the several kinds of government are varied, till they are at last brought back to that original form, from which the progress was begun. With the help of being acquainted with these principles, though it may not perhaps be easy to foretell the exact time of every alteration that may happen in a state, yet, if our sentiments are free from prejudice and passion, we shall very rarely be deceived in judging of the degree, either of exaltation or decline, in which it actually subsists, or in declaring the form, into which it must at last be changed. With regard especially to the commonwealth of Rome, this view of things cannot fail to lead us into the knowledge both of the original constitution, and the gradual progress of it towards perfection, as well as of the future revolution also that awaits it. For as this government, above all others, received, as we have al-

ready observed, both it's first establishment, and subsequent increase, from the settled laws of nature; it is reasonable to believe, that it will follow the same laws likewise, in being changed hereafter into a contrary form. But this will be more distinctly seen in the following parts of this discourse. I shall now give a short account of the frame of government that was established by Lycurgus. Such a digression will not be foreign to my design.

This legislator then, having considered with himself, that, according to the necessary and established course of all things, the several accidents and changes, that have now been mentioned, were inevitable, formed this conclusion: that every simple, and single, kind of government was insecure; on account of it's proneness to degenerate into that more vicious kind, which was most nearly allied to it by nature. For as rust is the inbred bane of iron, and worms of wood; and as these substances, even though they should escape all external violence, at last fall a prey to the evils that are as it were congenial with them; in the same manner likewise, every single kind of government breeds within itself some certain vice, which is attached by nature to it's very form, and which soon causes it's destruction. Thus royalty degenerates into tyranny; aristocracy into oligarchy; and democracy into savage violence. Nor is it possible, as we have already shewn, but that, in the course of time, these conversions must be thus produced. Lycurgus therefore, foreseeing this necessity, instead of adopting either of the single forms of government, collected what was excellent in them all; and so joined together the principles that were peculiar to each several form, that no one of them might be extended beyond proper bounds, and slide into the evil to which it was inclined by nature: but that each separate power, being still counteracted by the rest, might be retained in due position, and the whole government be preserved in equal balance; as a vessel, when impelled to

either side by the wind, is kept steady by a contrary force. Thus the dread of the people, to whom a certain share was allotted in the government, restrained the excesses and abuse of royalty. The people, on the other hand, were maintained in a due submission to the kings, by their apprehension of the power of the senate. For the members of the senate, being all selected from the best among the citizens, were always ready to support the cause of justice; and, by throwing their own weight into the scale, when either side was in danger of being oppressed by the other, to give such strength to the weakest party, as the constitution of the state required. By these means, the Lacedæmonians preserved their liberty intire, for a much longer time than any other people. And thus it was that Lycurgus, having been taught by reason to foresee a certain train of causes and events, was able to give a lasting strength to his establishment. The Romans on the other hand, though they arrived indeed at the same perfection in the constitution of their state, were not led to it by foresight or by reason. But, during the course of many contests and disorders in which they were engaged, having been careful always to adopt, upon every change, such improvements as the occasion itself suggested to them, they at last obtained the same end likewise, as that which Lycurgus had proposed; and completed the most beautiful frame of government, of all that are in our times known.

Let me only add, that a good judge of history will not form his opinion of a writer from any thing that is omitted by him, but from that which he relates. If indeed any falseness should be found in the things which he relates, it may be reasonable to impute the omission of the rest to ignorance. But if, on the other hand, all that he relates be true, it ought then to be acknowledged, that his silence with regard to some particular things is not the effect of ignorance, but of judgement and design.

CHAP. II.

THE three kinds of government, of which we have been speaking, were all found united in the commonwealth of Rome. And so even was the balance between them all, and so regular the administration that resulted from their union, that it was no easy thing, even for the Romans themselves, to determine with assurance, whether the intire state was to be esteemed an aristocracy, a democracy, or a monarchy. For if they turned their view upon the power of the Consuls, the government appeared to be purely monarchical and regal. If again the authority of the senate was considered, it then seemed to wear the form of aristocracy. And lastly, if regard was had to the share which the people possessed in the administration of affairs, it could then scarcely fail to be denominated a popular state. The several powers, that were appropriated to each of these distinct branches of the constitution at the time of which we are speaking, and which, with very little variation, are even still preserved, are these which follow.

The Consuls, while they remain in Rome, before they lead out the armies into the field, are the masters of all publick affairs. For all the other magistrates, the Tribunes alone excepted, are subject to them, and bound to obey their commands. They introduce embassadors into the senate. They propose also to the senate the subjects of debate; and direct all the forms that are observed in making the decrees. Nor is it less a part of their office likewise, to attend to those affairs that are transacted by the people: to call together general assemblies; to report to them the resolutions of the senate; and to ratify whatever is determined by the greater number. In all the preparations that are made for war, as well

as well as in the whole administration in the field, they possess an almost absolute authority. For to them it belongs, to impose upon the allies whatever services they judge expedient; to appoint the military tribunes; to enroll the legions, and make the necessary levies; and to inflict punishments, in the field, upon all that are subject to their command. Add to this, that they have the power likewise to expend whatever sums they may think convenient from the publick treasure; being attended for that purpose by a Quæstor, who is always ready to receive and execute their orders. When any one therefore directs his view to this part of the constitution, it is very reasonable for him to conclude, that the government is no other than a simple royalty. Let me only observe, that if in some of these particular points, or in those that will be hereafter mentioned, any change should be either now remarked, or should happen at some future time, such an alteration will not destroy the general principles of this discourse.

To the Senate belongs, in the first place, the sole care and management of the publick money. For all the returns that are brought into the treasury, as well as all the payments that are issued from it, are directed by their orders. Nor is it allowed to the Quæstors to apply any part of the revenue to particular occasions as they arise, without a decree of the senate; those sums alone excepted, which are expended in the service of the Consuls. And even those more general, as well as greatest disbursements, which are employed, at the return of every five years, in building and repairing the publick edifices, are assigned to the Censors for that purpose, by the express permission of the senate. To the senate also is referred the cognizance of all the crimes, committed in any part of Italy, that demand a publick examination and inquiry: such as treasons, conspiracies, poisonings, and assassinations. Add to this, that when any controversies arise, either between private men, or any of the cities of Italy, it is the part of the senate
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to adjust all disputes; to censure those that are deserving of blame; and to yield assistance to those, who stand in need of protection and defence. When any embassies are sent out of Italy; either to reconcile contending states; to offer exhortations and advice; or even, as it sometimes happens, to impose commands; to propose conditions of a treaty; or to make a denunciation of war; the care and conduct of all these transactions is intrusted wholly to the senate. When any ambassadors also arrive at Rome, it is the senate likewise that determines, in what manner they shall be received and treated, and what answer shall be given to their demands. In all these things, that have now been mentioned, the people has no share. To those therefore, who come to reside in Rome during the absence of the Consuls, the government appears to be purely aristocratical. Many of the Greeks especially, and of the foreign princes, are easily led into this persuasion: when they perceive that almost all the affairs, which they are forced to negotiate with the Romans, are determined by the senate.

And now it may well be asked, what part is left to the People in this government: since the senate, on the one hand, is vested with the sovereign power, in the several instances that have been here enumerated, and more especially in all things that concern the management and disposal of the publick treasure; and since the Consuls, on the other hand, are intrusted with the absolute direction of the preparations that are made for war, and exercise an uncontrouled authority in the field. There is however a part still allotted to the people; and indeed the most important part. For first, the people are the sole dispensers of rewards and punishments; which are the only bands, by which states and kingdoms, and in a word all human societies, are held together. For when the difference between these is overlooked, or when they are distributed without due distinction, nothing but disorder can ensue.

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Nor is it possible indeed, that government should be maintained, if the wicked stand in equal estimation with the good. The People then, when any offences demand such punishment, frequently condemn the citizens to the payment of a fine: those especially, who have been invested with the dignities of the state. To the people alone belongs the right to sentence any one to die. Upon this occasion, they have a custom which deserves to be mentioned with applause. The person accused is allowed to withdraw himself in open view, and embrace a voluntary banishment, if only a single tribe remains, that has not yet given judgement; and is suffered to retire in safety to Præneste, Tibur, Naples, or any other of the confederate cities. The publick magistracies are allotted also by the people to those who are esteemed worthy of them: and these are the noblest rewards that any government can bestow on virtue. To the people belongs the power of approving or rejecting laws: and, which is still of greater importance, peace and war are likewise fixed by their deliberations. When any alliance is concluded, any war ended, or treaty made; to them the conditions are referred, and by them either annulled or ratified. And thus again, from a view of all these circumstances, it might with reason be imagined, that the people had engrossed the largest portion of the government, and that the state was plainly a democracy.

Such are the parts of the administration, which are distinctly assigned to each of the three forms of government, that are united in the commonwealth of Rome. It now remains to be considered, in what manner each several form is enabled to counteract the others, or to co-operate with them.

When the Consuls, invested with the power that has been mentioned, lead the armies into the field, though they seem indeed to hold such absolute authority as is sufficient for all purposes, yet are they in truth so dependent both on the senate and the people, that without their assistance they
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are by no means able to accomplish any design. It is well known that armies demand a continual supply of necessaries. But neither corn, nor habits, nor even the military stipends, can at any time be transmitted to the legions, unless by an express order of the senate. Any opposition therefore, or delay, on the part of this assembly, is sufficient always to defeat the enterprizes of the Generals. It is the senate likewise, that either compels the Consuls to leave their designs imperfect, or enables them to complete the projects which they have formed; by sending a successor into each of their several provinces, upon the expiration of the annual term, or by continuing them in the same command. The senate also has the power to aggrandize and amplify the victories that are gained, or on the contrary to depreciate and debase them. For that which is called among the Romans a Triumph, in which a sensible representation of the actions of the Generals is exposed in solemn procession to the view of all the citizens, can neither be exhibited with due pomp and splendour, nor indeed be in any manner celebrated, unless the consent of the senate be first obtained, together with the sums that are requisite for the expence. Nor is it less necessary on the other hand, that the Consuls, how far soever they may happen to be removed from Rome, should be careful to preserve the good affections of the people. For the people, as we have already mentioned, annuls, or ratifies, all treaties. But that which is of greatest moment is, that the Consuls, at the time of laying down their office, are bound also to submit their past administration to the judgement of the people. And thus these magistrates can at no time think themselves secure, if they neglect to gain the approbation both of the senate, and the people.

In the same manner the senate also, though invested with so great authority, is bound to yield a certain attention to the people, and to act in concert with them, in all affairs that

are of great and general importance. With regard especially to those offences, that are committed against the state, and which demand a capital punishment, no inquiry can be perfected, nor any judgement carried into execution, unless the people confirm what the senate has before decreed. Nor are the things, which more immediately regard the senate itself, less subject to the same controul. For if a law should at any time be proposed, to lessen the received authority of the senators; to detract from their honours and preeminence; or even to deprive them of a part of their possessions; it belongs wholly to the people to establish or reject it. And even still more; the interposition of a single Tribune is sufficient, not only to suspend the deliberations of the senate, but to prevent them also from holding any meeting or assembly. Now the peculiar office of the Tribunes is, to declare those sentiments that are most pleasing to the people, and principally to promote their interests and designs. And thus the senate, on account of all these reasons, is forced to cultivate the favour, and gratify the inclinations, of the people.

The people again, on their part, are held in a dependance on the senate, and are obliged to pay a certain deference, both to the particular members, and to the general body. In every part of Italy there are works of various kinds, which are let to farm by the Censors; such as the building, or repairing, of the publick edifices, which are almost innumerable; the care of rivers, harbours, gardens, mines, and lands; every thing, in a word, that falls beneath the dominion of the Romans. In all these things, the people are the undertakers: insomuch that there are scarcely any to be found, that are not in some degree involved, either in the contracts, or in the management of the works. For some take the farms of the Censors at a certain price: others become partners with the first. Some again engage themselves as sureties for the farmers: and others, in support also of these sureties, pledge their

their own fortunes to the state. Now the supreme direction of all these affairs is placed wholly in the senate. The senate has the power to allot a longer time; to lighten the conditions of the agreement, in case that any accident has intervened; or even to release the contractors from their bargain, if the terms should be found impracticable. There are also many other circumstances, in which those that are engaged in any of these publick works may be either greatly injured, or greatly benefited, by the senate; since to this body, as we have already observed, all things that belong to these transactions are constantly referred. But there is still another advantage, of much greater moment. For from this order likewise judges are selected, in almost every accusation of considerable weight, whether it be of a publick, or private, nature. The people therefore, being by these means held under due subjection and restraint, and doubtful of obtaining that protection, which they foresee that they may at some time want, are always cautious of exciting any opposition to the measures of the senate. Nor are they, on the other hand, less ready to pay obedience to the orders of the Consuls; through the dread of that supreme authority, to which the citizens in general, as well as each particular man, are obnoxious in the field.

Thus, while each of these separate parts is enabled either to assist or obstruct the rest, the government, by the apt contexture of them all in the general frame, is so well secured against every accident, that it seems scarcely possible to invent a more perfect system. For when the dread of any common danger, that threatens from abroad, constrains all the orders of the state to unite together, and co-operate with joint assistance; such is the strength of the republick, that as, on the one hand, no measures that are necessary are neglected, while all men fix their thoughts upon the present exigency; so neither is it possible on the other hand, that their designs

should at any time be frustrated through the want of due celerity, because all in general, as well as every citizen in particular, employ their utmost efforts, to carry what has been determined into execution. Thus the government, by the very form and peculiar nature of it's constitution, is equally enabled to resist all attacks, and to accomplish every purpose. And when again all apprehensions of foreign enemies are past, and the Romans, being now settled in tranquillity, and enjoying at their leisure all the fruits of victory, begin to yield to the seduction of ease and plenty, and, as it happens usually in such conjunctures, become haughty and ungovernable; then chiefly we may observe, in what manner the same constitution likewise finds in itself a remedy against the impending danger. For whenever either of the separate parts of the republick attempts to exceed it's proper limits, excites contention and dispute, and struggles to obtain a greater share of power, than that which is assigned to it by the laws; it is manifest, that since no one single part, as we have shewn in this discourse, is in itself supreme or absolute, but that on the contrary the powers which are assigned to each are still subject to reciprocal controul, the part, which thus aspires, must soon be reduced again within it's own just bounds, and not be suffered to insult or depress the rest. And thus the several orders, of which the state is framed, are forced always to maintain their due position: being partly counterworked in their designs; and partly also restrained from making any attempt, by the dread of falling under that authority to which they are exposed.

THE

THE
GENERAL HISTORY

OF

POLYBIUS.

BOOK the SIXTH.

EXTRACT the SECOND.

Some peculiar excellencies in the Roman government and manners, illustrated by a comparison of them with those of other states.

CHAP. I.

THE states, which almost all writers have transmitted to us with applause, are those of Lacedæmon, Mantinea, Crete, and Carthage. To these some have also added the governments of Thebes and Athens. With regard to the first, it may be allowed perhaps that they merit some distinction. But the republicks of Thebes and Athens very little deserve, in my opinion, to be made the subject of any particular discourse: because they neither rose by natural steps to greatness; nor remained for any long continuance in a prosperous state;

state; nor sunk again by a gradual decline. But having owed all their exaltation merely to some favourable seasons, and borrowed a kind of transient splendour from the times, in that very moment which saw them flourish, and which seemed to promise a lasting confirmation of their power, they were thrown back again by fortune into a contrary state. Thus the Thebans, having applied to their own advantage the imprudent conduct of the Lacedæmonians, and the hatred in which they were held by their allies, acquired indeed, through the ability of one or two of their citizens who discerned these circumstances, the reputation of superiority among the Greeks. But that the success, which they at this time gained, arose not from the constitution of their government, but from the skill of those who governed, the ill fortune that followed close behind rendered clear and incontestable. For as the power of Thebes grew up and flourished with the lives of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, and, when they died, was immediately dissolved; there needs no farther proof, that the splendour, which then accrued to the republick, was derived wholly from the virtue of these citizens, and not from any excellence in the state. The same observation may be applied as justly to the commonwealth of Athens: which flourished indeed at many other particular seasons; but having been raised by the able conduct of Themistocles to the greatest height of glory, within a short time afterwards was sunk again in weakness and disgrace. The cause of this sudden change was no other than the irregular constitution of the government. For the Athenian state may very aptly be compared to a ship, in which there is no person that commands. In such a vessel, when the mariners, either through the dread of enemies, or the impending dangers of a storm, are compelled to act together in concert, and attend to the orders of the pilot, all things that are necessary are performed by them with diligence and skill. But no sooner are these apprehensions past, than they begin
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to reject all controul, and engage in mutual contests, such as the diversity of their sentiments inspires. And while some among them are earnest for continuing their course, and others not less urgent with the pilot to cast anchor; while the first unfurl the sails, and the latter interpose with violence, and command them to be furled; this spirit of contention and seditious obstinacy not only affords a shameful spectacle to those that behold it at a distance, but renders the safety likewise of all who are embarked in the vessel so precarious, that very frequently, when they have escaped the dangers of the greatest seas and most dreadful tempests, they are at last wrecked even in the harbour, and when they have just gained the land. In the same manner the Athenian state, after having been conducted, by the virtue of the governours and the people, through all the difficulties of the most threatening seasons, has often unaccountably been overfet, in times of perfect safety and tranquillity. There is no need therefore to say more concerning this republick, or that of Thebes; in both of which the multitude disposes all things, as the impulse of their own peculiar passions prompts them: the people, in the one, being naturally precipitate and eager above the rest of men; and in the other, trained up to habits of force and violence.

Let us pass on then to the government of Crete; and consider, upon what grounds it is, that the most sensible of the ancient writers, such as Ephorus, Xenophon, Callisthenes, and Plato, have ventured to affirm; first, that the frame of this republick very much resembles, or rather is the same with that of Sparta; and secondly, that the constitution itself is such as deserves to be applauded. In my judgement, their opinion with respect to both these points is very distant from the truth. Whether it be or not, the following observations may enable us to determine. And first, concerning the little resemblance that is to be found between these two states.

There are three things mentioned by these writers, as distinguishing the Spartan government. The first is the equality of possessions in land; of which no one is permitted to obtain a greater portion than another: the whole lands, that belong to the community, being divided in equal shares among all the citizens. The second is the neglect of wealth, that prevails among this people. That even the use of money is unknown among them: and that, by consequence, the very root of that contention, which springs from the possession of less and more, is utterly destroyed. In the last place, as they affirm, the kings of Lacedæmon enjoy a perpetual and hereditary sovereignty; and the senators, with whose participation, and by whose advice, the intire administration of affairs is regulated, hold their dignity during life. Now in all these points the government of Crète is contrary to that of Sparta. For the Cretans are permitted, by their laws, to possess, without any bounds, as large a property in land as they are able to obtain. The estimation also of money is so great among them, that it is not only necessary, but even highly honourable to acquire it. And indeed the desire of amassing wealth, and the habit of increasing it, are so deeply implanted in the very manners of this people, that they alone of all mankind think nothing sordid or dishonourable that is joined with gain. Lastly, in this island, all the publick offices are renewed every year; and are constituted in a manner purely democratical. I have often therefore been led to wonder, that states, which differ so essentially, should be thus joined together by these writers, as if they were of a similar kind and nature. But it is not only to be imputed to them, that they have barely overlooked this difference. For when they have employed great pains to shew, that Lycurgus alone, of all mankind, discerned the means that were most proper to give stability to government; that, as every state can only be maintained, by bravery in war, and union among the citizens, this legislator, when

when he took away from his republick the desire of riches, removed also with it all civil tumult and dissension, and that the Lacedæmonians, being thus freed from these domestick evils, lived together in perfect concord, and preserved such order in their government, as was not to be found in any of the states of Greece; when they have discoursed, I say, at large, on all these circumstances, and seen also on the other hand, that the natural lust of wealth, which prevails among the Cretans, gives birth continually both to private contests, and to publick dissensions and divisions; produces murders and intestine wars; yet still, as if a difference so acknowledged were of small importance, they boldly venture to affirm, that there is a close resemblance between the two republicks. And indeed Ephorus, when he treats of either of them, employs indiscriminately the same expressions, the proper names alone excepted; so that, unless we attend to these, it is not possible to distinguish, which of the two is designed by his discourse. Such then is the difference between the government of Crete and that of Sparta. I shall now endeavour to shew, that the first is neither worthy of applause, nor imitation.

There are two things, which are essential parts in every government, and according to which the principles and constitution of the state itself, will be found to deserve either praise or censure. These are, the manners and the laws. The manners and the laws, that are most worthy to be approved, are those which form the lives of individuals to sanctity and moderation, and the general temper of the whole community to mildness and to justice: and those which produce contrary effects are fit to be rejected. When we perceive therefore, that the laws and manners of a state are such as tend to promote the exercise of honesty and virtue, as it is very reasonable for us to conclude, that the state itself is virtuous, and the members of it free from all reproach; so, on the other hand, when an immoderate desire of gain governs the life of every pri-

vate citizen, and the publick transactions of the state are contrary to justice, we may safely venture to declare, that the laws of this community are bad, the manners of the people corrupt and vicious, and the whole government contemptible. Now if we consider the character and conduct of the Cretans, it is certain, that scarcely an example can be found of any nation, in which the private manners of the citizens are more replete with artifice and fraud, or where the publick enterprizes are more unjust. As this republick therefore neither bears any resemblance to that of Sparta, nor deserves in any manner to be approved or imitated, we shall here reject it, as unworthy of our notice in that comparison which we propose.

Nor is it reasonable to expect, that we should allow any place in this inquiry to the commonwealth of Plato; how much soever it may have been celebrated by some philosophers. For as in the contests between artists, or combatants in the publick games, no persons are admitted, who have not first been trained in proper discipline, and prepared by exercise; so neither can this republick hope to be received into any competition concerning excellence, till it has first shewn its strength in some real action. To compare it, such as it has hitherto remained, with the republicks of Sparta, Rome, and Carthage, would be no less absurd, than to compare a statue with a breathing and living man. For though the beauty of the work might deserve perhaps the highest commendation, yet the comparison of an inanimate form with an animated being would very justly appear defective and incongruous to every eye. Leaving therefore this republick and that of Crete, let us return again to the government of Sparta.

When I consider the laws that were invented by Lycurgus, as tending to promote union among the citizens, to secure the Laconian territory from all danger, and to maintain his people in the undisturbed enjoyment of their liberty, they appear to have been so wisely framed, and adapted with such true

true foresight to all these purposes, that I am almost tempted to regard them, rather as the work of some divinity, than the effort of any human mind. In establishing an equality of possessions, and in restraining all the citizens to the constant use of one simple and common diet, he chose the means that were most effectual, to render the Lacedæmonians moderate in their desires, and to banish all contention from the state. By accustoming them to painful labours, and dangerous exercises, he formed them to be brave and daring. And where temperance and fortitude meet together, in any man, or in any community of men, it is scarcely possible that those, who are habituated to the practice of these virtues, should ever be disturbed by intestine evils, or be subdued by external force. Lycurgus therefore, having thus raised the frame of his republick upon these two principles, secured all Laconia against the dread of any hostile attempts, and established the liberty of Sparta upon such strong foundations, that it subsisted during many ages. But it appears to me that this Legislator, both in the frame of his particular laws, and in the general constitution of the government, wholly overlooked one great precaution: the precaution that was necessary to restrain his people, from invading the territory of their neighbours, from aspiring to an extended sovereignty, or raising themselves in any manner to be the arbiters of all affairs. As the particular members of the state were accustomed by his institutions to live in the simplest and most frugal manner, and to remain satisfied with their own possessions, it was also no less requisite, either to infuse into the whole community the same willing spirit of contentedness and moderation, or to force them through necessity to adopt it. But Lycurgus, while he freed his citizens from jealousy and envious competition in their private manners, and in the administration of their own particular government, at the same time allowed full scope to their ambitious projects against the rest of Greece, and suffered them to be-

come most eager and aspiring, in the pursuit both of wealth and power. For who is ignorant, that the Lacedæmonians, the first almost of all the Greeks, were led by the desire of gain to invade the territory of their neighbours, and declared war against the Messenians, with design to reduce them into slavery? Who has not heard, that, when they had invested Messene with their forces, they persisted in the attempt with so great obstinacy, that they bound themselves by an oath, never to raise the siege till the city should be taken? Nor is it less notorious to all mankind, that, with a view of establishing their own dominion over the Grecian states, they submitted to obey the orders even of a people whom they had conquered. For after having bravely maintained the cause of the common liberty of all the Greeks, and subdued the Persians who brought an army to invade it; after having defeated, and forced them to return; they basely yielded to them many cities, by the peace that was concluded by Antalcidas; that they might obtain in return the treasure that was necessary, for acquiring to themselves the sovereignty of Greece. Upon this occasion it was that they first perceived, in what part their government was defective. For as long as they confined their views of conquest to the neighbouring states, and to the limits of Peloponnesus, they were able to draw from Laconia itself such supplies as were sufficient for the accomplishment of their designs: as all things that were necessary were collected within their reach; and as the distance was commodious for their return back again to their country, and for transporting all their stores. But when they attempted to maintain fleets upon the sea, and to send their armies beyond the bounds of Peloponnesus; it very soon was seen, that neither their iron money, nor the exchange of their own natural commodities, that was permitted by Lycurgus, was capable of supplying all their wants: but that money of a common currency, and stores drawn from foreign countries, were necessary to support such

such enterprizes. They were forced therefore to supplicate assistance from the court of Persia; to impose a tribute upon the islands; and to exact contributions from all the Greeks: being fully assured, that while they adhered to the institutions of Lycurgus, they could never hope to obtain the supreme command in Greece, nor be able even in any manner to contend for superiority with other states. But to what purpose is this digression? It is to shew by the evidence of facts, that the laws of Lycurgus were perfectly well contrived, for maintaining his people in the undisturbed possession of their own proper territory, and for preserving their liberty inviolable: and that, where men propose to themselves these advantages as the sole objects of political institutions, it must be acknowledged, that there neither is, nor ever was, any system or frame of government, more eligible than that of Sparta. But if a people on the other hand should desire to enlarge their views, and esteem it more great and glorious to hold many in subjection, to extend their empire over various countries, and to draw the submission of all mankind towards them; it must then also be confessed, that the Lacedæmonian constitution is defective; and that the Roman government is framed with greater strength, for the accomplishment of such designs. The truth of this remark is manifest from that which happened in the two republicks. For the Lacedæmonians no sooner endeavoured to obtain the sovereignty of Greece, than they brought their own liberty into danger. But the Romans, having once subdued to their dominion all the parts of Italy, reduced, within a short time afterwards, the whole world beneath their yoke: being greatly assisted in the execution of this vast attempt, by the plenty of all necessary stores, and the facility with which they were continually supplied.

C H A P. II.

THE government of Carthage seems also to have been originally well contrived, with regard to those general forms that have been mentioned. For there were kings in this government; together with a senate, which was vested with aristocratical authority. The people likewise enjoyed the exercise of certain powers that were appropriated to them. In a word, the intire frame of the republick very much resembled those of Rome and Sparta. But at the time of the war of Annibal, the Carthaginian constitution was worse in it's condition than the Roman. For as nature has assigned to every body, every government, and every action, three successive periods; the first, of growth; the second, of perfection; and that which follows, of decay; and as the period of perfection is the time in which they severally display their greatest strength; from hence arose the difference, that was then found between the two republicks. For the government of Carthage, having reached the highest point of vigour and perfection much sooner than that of Rome, had now declined from it in the same proportion: whereas the Romans, at this very time, had just raised their constitution to the most flourishing and perfect state. The effect of this difference was, that among the Carthaginians the people possessed the greatest sway in all deliberations, but the senate among the Romans. And as, in the one republick, all measures were determined by the multitude; and, in the other, by the most eminent citizens; of so great force was this advantage in the conduct of affairs, that the Romans, though brought by repeated losses into the greatest danger, became, through the wisdom of their counsels, superior to the Carthaginians in the war.

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If we descend to a more particular comparison, we shall find, that, with respect to military science for example, the Carthaginians, in the management and conduct of a naval war, are more skilful than the Romans. For the Carthaginians have derived this knowledge from their ancestors through a long course of ages; and are more exercised in maritime affairs, than any other people. But the Romans, on the other hand, are far superior in all things that belong to the establishment and discipline of armies. For this discipline, which is regarded by them as the chief and constant object of their care, is utterly neglected by the Carthaginians; except only that they bestow some little attention upon their cavalry. The reason of this difference is, that the Carthaginians employ foreign mercenaries; and that on the contrary the Roman armies are composed of citizens, and of the people of the country. Now in this respect, the government of Rome is greatly preferable to that of Carthage. For while the Carthaginians intrust the preservation of their liberty to the care of venal troops; the Romans place all their confidence in their own bravery, and in the assistance of their allies. From hence it happens, that the Romans, though at first defeated, are always able to renew the war; and that the Carthaginian armies never are repaired without great difficulty. Add to this, that the Romans, fighting for their country and their children, never suffer their ardour to be slackened; but persist with the same steady spirit, till they become superior to their enemies. From hence it happens likewise, that even in actions upon the sea, the Romans, though inferior to the Carthaginians, as we have already observed, in naval knowledge and experience, very frequently obtain success, through the mere bravery of their forces. For though in all such contests a skill in maritime affairs must be allowed to be of the greatest use; yet, on the other hand, the valour of the

troops that are engaged is often no less effectual to draw the victory to their side.

Now the people of Italy are by nature superior to the Carthaginians and the Africans, both in bodily strength, and in courage. Add to this, that they have among them certain institutions, by which the young men are greatly animated to perform acts of bravery. It will be sufficient to mention one of these, as a proof of the attention that is shewn by the Roman government, to infuse such a spirit into the citizens, as shall lead them to encounter every kind of danger, for the sake of obtaining reputation in their country. When any illustrious person dies, he is carried in procession, with the rest of the funeral pomp, to the Rostra in the Forum: sometimes placed conspicuous in an upright posture; and sometimes, though less frequently, reclined. And while the people are all standing round, his son, if he has left one of sufficient age, and who is then at Rome, or, if otherwise, some person of his kindred, ascends the Rostra, and extols the virtues of the deceased, and the great deeds that were performed by him in his life. By this discourse, which recalls his past actions to remembrance, and places them in open view before all the multitude, not those alone who were sharers in his victories, but even the rest who bore no part in his exploits, are moved to such sympathy of sorrow, that the accident seems rather to be a publick misfortune, than a private loss. He is then buried with the usual rites: and afterwards an image, which both in features and complexion expresses an exact resemblance of his face, is set up in the most conspicuous part of the house, inclosed in a shrine of wood. Upon solemn festivals, these images are uncovered, and adorned with the greatest care. And, when any other person of the same family dies, they are carried also in the funeral procession, with a body added to the bust, that the representation may

may be just even with regard to size. They are dressed likewise in the habits, that belong to the ranks, which they severally filled when they were alive. If they were Consuls or Prætors, in a gown bordered with purple: if Censors, in a purple robe: and if they triumphed, or obtained any similar honour, in a vest embroidered with gold. Thus apparelled, they are drawn along in chariots; preceded by the rods and axes, and other ensigns of their former dignity. And when they arrive at the Forum, they are all seated upon chairs of ivory: and there exhibit the noblest object, that can be offered to a youthful mind, warmed with the love of virtue and of glory. For who can behold without emotion the forms of so many illustrious men, thus living, as it were, and breathing together in his presence? Or what spectacle can be conceived more great and striking? The person also that is appointed to harangue, when he has exhausted all the praises of the deceased, turns his discourse to the rest; whose images are before him: and, beginning with the most ancient of them, recounts the fortunes and the exploits of every one in turn. By this method, which renews continually the remembrance of men celebrated for their virtue, the fame of every great and noble action becomes immortal; and the glory of those, by whose services their country has been benefited, is rendered familiar to the people, and delivered down to future times. But the chief advantage is, that by the hope of obtaining this honourable fame, which is reserved for virtue, the young men are animated to sustain all danger, in the cause of the common safety. For from hence it has happened, that many among the Romans have voluntarily engaged in single combat, in order to decide the fortune of an intestine war. Many also have devoted themselves to inevitable death: some of them in battle, to save the lives of other citizens; and some in time of peace, to rescue the whole state from destruction. Others again, who have been invested with the highest dignities,

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have, in defiance of all law and custom, condemned their own sons to die: shewing greater regard to the advantage of their country, than to the bonds of nature, and the closest ties of kindred. Very frequent are the examples of this kind, that are recorded in the Roman story. I shall here mention one, as a signal instance, and proof of the truth of all that I have affirmed. Horatius surnamed Cocles, being engaged in combat with two enemies, at the farthest extremity of the bridge that led into Rome across the Tiber, and perceiving that many others were advancing fast to their assistance, was apprehensive that they would force their way together into the city. Turning himself therefore to his companions that were behind him, he called to them aloud, that they should immediately retire, and break the bridge. While they were employed in this work, Horatius, though covered over with wounds, still maintained his post, and stopped the progress of the enemies; who were struck with his firmness and intrepid courage, even more than with the strength of his resistance. And when the bridge was broken, and the city secured from insult, he threw himself into the river with his armour, and there lost his life as he had designed: having preferred the safety of his country, and the future fame that was sure to follow such an action, to his own present existence, and to the time that remained for him to live. Such is the spirit, and such the emulation of achieving glorious actions, which the Roman institutions are fitted to infuse into the minds of youth.

In all things that regard the acquisition of wealth, the manners also and the customs of the Romans are greatly preferable to those of the Carthaginians. Among the latter, nothing is reputed infamous, that is joined with gain. But among the former, nothing is held more base, than to be corrupted by gifts, or to covet an increase of wealth by means that are unjust. For as much as they esteem the possession of

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honest riches to be fair and honourable, so much, on the hand, all those that are amassed by unlawful arts, are viewed by them with horror and reproach. The truth of this fact is clearly seen in the following instance. Among the Carthaginians, money is openly employed, to obtain the dignities of the state: but all such proceeding is a capital crime in Rome. As the rewards therefore that are proposed to virtue in the two republicks are so different, it cannot but happen, that the attention of the citizens to form their minds to virtuous actions must be also different.

But among all the useful institutions, that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable perhaps is the opinion which the people are taught to hold concerning the Gods: and that, which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears in my judgement to be the very thing by which this republick chiefly is sustained. I mean, Superstition: which is impressed with all it's terrors; and influences both the private actions of the citizens, and the publick administration also of the state, in a degree that can scarcely be exceeded. This may appear astonishing to many: To me it is evident, that this contrivance was at first adopted for the sake of the multitude. For if it were possible that a state could be composed of wise men only, there would be no need perhaps of any such invention. But as the people universally are fickle and inconstant, filled with irregular desires, precipitate in their passions, and prone to violence; there is no way left to restrain them, but by the dread of things unseen, and by the pageantry of terrifying fiction. The ancients therefore acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the Gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much more those of the present age are to be charged with rashness and absurdity, in endeavouring to extirpate these opinions. For, not to mention other effects that flow from such an institution; if,

among the Greeks for example, a single talent only be intrusted to those who have the management of any of the publick money; though they give ten written fureties, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, they are unable to discharge the trust reposed in them with integrity. But the Romans on the other hand, who in the course of their magistracies, and in embassies, disburse the greatest sums, are prevailed on by the single obligation of an oath, to perform their duty with inviolable honesty. And as, in other states, a man is rarely to be found, whose hands are pure from publick robbery; so, among the Romans, it is no less rare, to discover one that is tainted with this crime.

But all things are subject to decay and change. This is a truth so evident, and so demonstrated by the perpetual and the necessary course of nature, that it needs no other proof. Now there are two ways by which every kind of government is destroyed: either by some accident that happens from without; or some evil that arises within itself. What the first will be, it is not always easy to foresee: but the latter is certain and determinate. We have already shewn, what are the original, and what the secondary, forms of government; and in what manner also they are reciprocally converted each into the other. Whoever therefore is able to connect the beginning with the end in this inquiry, will be able also to declare with some assurance, what will be the future fortune of the Roman government. At least in my judgement nothing is more easy. For when a state, after having passed with safety through many and great dangers, arrives at the highest degree of power, and possesses an intire and undisputed sovereignty; it is manifest, that the long continuance of prosperity must give birth to costly and luxurious manners, and that the minds of men will be heated with ambitious contests, and become too eager and aspiring in the pursuit of dignities. And as these evils are continually increased, the desire of power and rule,
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and the imagined ignominy of remaining in a subject state, will first begin to work the ruin of the republick: arrogance and luxury will afterwards advance it: and in the end, the change will be completed by the people: when the avarice of some is found to injure and oppress them; and the ambition of others swells their vanity, and poisons them with flattering hopes. For then, being inflamed with rage, and following only the dictates of their passions, they no longer will submit to any controul; or be contented with an equal share of the administration, in conjunction with their rulers: but will draw to themselves the intire sovereignty, and supreme direction of all affairs. When this is done, the government will assume indeed the fairest of all names, that of a free and popular state; but will in truth be the greatest of all evils, a government administered by a blind and unskilful multitude.

As we have thus sufficiently explained the constitution and the growth of the Roman government; have marked the causes of that greatness in which it now subsists; and shewn by comparison, in what view it may be judged inferior, and in what superior, to other states; we shall here close this discourse. But as every skilful artist offers some piece of work to publick view, as a proof of his abilities; in the same manner we also, taking some part of history, that is connected with the times from which we were led into this digression, and making a short recital of one single action, shall endeavour to demonstrate by fact as well as words, what was the strength, and how great the vigour, which at that time were displayed by this republick.

When Annibal, after the battle of Cannæ, had taken prisoners eight thousand of the Romans, who were left to guard the camp; he permitted them to send a deputation to Rome, to treat of their ransom and redemption. Ten persons, the most illustrious that were among them, were appointed for this purpose: and the General, having first commanded them

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to swear, that they would return to him again, suffered them to depart. But one of the number, as soon as they had passed the intrenchment, having said that he had forgotten something, went back into the camp, took what he had left, and then continued his journey with the rest: persuading himself, that by this return he had discharged his promise, and satisfied the obligation of the oath. When they arrived at Rome, they earnestly intreated the senate, not to envy them the safety that was offered; but to suffer them to be restored again to their several families, at the price of three minæ for each prisoner, which was the sum that Annibal demanded: that they were not unworthy of this favour: that they neither had through cowardice deserted their post in battle; nor done any thing that had brought dishonour upon the Roman name: but that, having been left to guard the camp, they had been thrown by unavoidable necessity, after the destruction of all the rest of the army, into the power of the enemy. The Romans were at this time weakened by repeated losses; were deserted by almost every one of their allies; and seemed even to expect, that Rome itself would instantly be attacked; yet, when they had heard the deputies, they neither were deterred by adverse fortune from attending to what was fit and right, nor neglected any of those measures that were necessary to the publick safety. But perceiving, that the design of Annibal, in this proceeding, was both to acquire a large supply of money, and at the same time to check the ardour of his enemies in battle, by opening to their view the means of safety even though they should be conquered, they were so far from yielding to this request, that they shewed no regard either to the distressed condition of their fellow-citizens, or to the services that might be expected from the prisoners: but resolved to disappoint the hopes, and frustrate the intentions of this General, by rejecting all terms of ransom. They made a law also, by which it was declared, that the soldiers
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that were left must either conquer, or must die; and that no other hope of safety was reserved for them, in case that they were conquered. After this determination, they dismissed the nine deputies, who on account of their oath were willing to return; and taking the other, who had endeavoured to elude by sophistry what he had sworn, they sent him back bound to the enemy: so that Annibal was much less filled with joy, from having vanquished the Romans in the field, than he was struck with terror and astonishment, at the firmness and the magnanimity that appeared in their deliberations.